



**COMHAIRLE NAN EILEAN SIAR**  
**Education and Children's Services Department**

**Future strategy for provision of education in the Western Isles**  
**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT: WORKSHOP FEEDBACK**

**LOCHS AND UIG – 25 June 2009**

**TWO WORKSHOPS**

<b>1. What are the advantages in keeping the current number of schools?</b>
School is the heart of the community Important for early years children to be in a small school. More opportunities to participate in meaningful roles in the school More chance of pupil difficulties to be picked up earlier in a small school. Attraction of families if there's a school Children feel part of local community Building – focus for community Less travelling Sense of belonging Pupil-teacher relationships.
<b>2 What are the disadvantages in keeping the current number of schools?</b>
Cost Falling rolls Fewer opportunities for big teams Lack of challenge because of numbers More poorly resourced and maintained.
<b>3 What would be the advantages in reducing the number of schools?</b>
More money for the Council to spend on schools that stay open. Better facilities Pooled resources (human/physical) Social/emotional development of pupils/staff
<b>4 What would be the disadvantages in reducing the number of schools?</b>
Travelling distances Loss of pre-school provision Effect on small communities – losing their school Effect (detrimental) on the Gaelic language specifically of having a small group in a large school. Loss of the school as a community facility. Job losses Rural sustainability.
<b>5 What kind of Gaelic medium provision should the Comhairle have?</b>
A Gaelic medium school in Stornoway but not for us! First two years total immersion then parents elect Gaelic stream or English stream Proposal to close Balallan School but no proposal as to where the GMU and Croileagan would go. Is there any possibility of a Gaelic school in the Lochs area? Employment opportunities One Gaelic medium school per Learning Community
<b>6 What are the other needs of this area for Comhairle services?</b>
Pavements Streetlights switched off Playparks More clubs More buses Transport infrastructure Jobs Housing Technology – broadband

**Main Points**

Why close down a school that is in the heart of the community which provides an individualised education for all its pupils.

Provide transport for 2 ½ year olds for half an hour travelling time with escorts, car seats etc – not a good idea

After school activities

Pupil inclusion

How can our language, culture and communities be protected to be passed on to them.

Concern re the de-population of rural communities

Keeping a sense of local community/facilities

Job opportunities and employment

PS. What criteria should be used when considering rationalising the school estate